(NWDPRA) since 1990-91 against the target of 28.00 lakh ha. An amount of Rs. 226.55 crores and Rs. 203.40 crores have been utilized during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively.

[Translation]

Kasturba Gandhi Education Scheme

3142. SHRI RAMTAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the Kasturba Gandhi Education Scheme and the progress made under the same, so far;

(b) whether this scheme is likely to be implemented in all the districts of the country; and

(c) if so, the fund earmarked for the purpose, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) to (c) A sum of Rs. 250 Crores have been earmarked in the current years Budget for Kasturba Gandhi Swatantrata Vidyalaya Scheme. The details of the Scheme are under finalisation.

[English]

Loss to FCI Due to Diversion of Wheat

3143. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI :
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Wheat diversion results big loss to the State Exchequer" appearing in the 'Indian Express' of March 30, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) whether wheat meant for domestic use was exported at lower prices by the Food Corporation of India;

(d) if so, the main reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government have conducted an enquiry in this regard;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the action taken against the guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A summary of the points appearing in the 'Indian Express' of March 30, 1997 and the comments of this Ministry thereon is given in the Statement attached.

(c) FCI has not exported any quantity of wheat during 1995-96 and 1996-97.

(d) to (g) As FCI has not exported any quantity of wheat, the question of conducting an enquiry in this regard and taking action against the guilty officials of FCI does not arise. However, Punjab and Haryana High Court *vide* its order dated 24.7.1997 has ordered a probe into the alleged irregularities in the Open Market Sale Scheme (D) in Punjab and Haryana.

Statement

Summary of the Points Appearing in Indian Express of 30.3.97	Comments
1	2
(i) Diversion of wheat meant for domestic consumption to export	Various precautions were incorporated in the guidelines issued by this Ministry on 26.8.96 to minimise sale to take parties, diversion from domestic use to export. The involvement of the State Government was also envisaged to keep a watch on the allottees of open sale. As envisaged in the guidelines dated 26.8.96, the buyers have also been asked by FCI to give an undertaking that wheat lifted under OMSS (D) is utilised for domestic sale purposes. In case, as alleged, the wheat issued under OMSS (D) has been recycled by the buyers for export, it was the matter of the concerned State Government to enforce such laws, food being the State subject. However, FCI has already investigated several cases wherein officers/officials of the Corporation have been found with any kind of malafide, suitable action has already been taken/initiated against them as per the procedure.

1		2
		rules in vogue. In individual cases of diversion/misuse of authority, whenever brought to the notice of the Government, suitable action was initiated. One case relating to Haryana has been agreed to be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for investigation. Besides, Roller Flour Mills/ traders are always free to purchase their requirements from any of the other sources and it cannot be concluded that excess export was due to diversion of wheat sold under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic).
(ii)	FCI imported wheat at much higher prices than what was allotted to the Indian traders.	During 1995-96, export sale prices ranged between Rs. 4100 and Rs. 5136.50 per Metric Tonne. It is true that wheat was imported at prices higher than those at which wheat was sold to the traders under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Export). Import of wheat was resorted to, to tide over domestic wheat situation and rising trend in the prices of wheat and wheat products in the domestic market. This situation arose as a result of the fall in the production of wheat and consequent fall in the procurement of wheat for the Central Pool by 4.1 Million Tonnes during 1996-97.
(iii)	FCI released only 81,000 tonnes of wheat for export whereas the actual export was 6,17,211 MT during 1995-96. Similarly during 1996-97, FCI sold for export 4,27,000 MT of wheat whereas the actual export was 10,64,493 MT.	The newspaper report highlights the fact that during 1995-96 and 1996-97 export of wheat from the country as a whole was far in excess of the quantities sold for export purposes by FCI. During 1995-96 and 1996-97 (upto 8.1.1997) export of wheat was permissible subject to quantitative ceilings. The details of ceilings fixed for 1995-96 and 1996-97 were as under:— (Qty. in lakh MT) Year / Durum wheat / Non-durum wheat 1995-96 / 5.00 / 25.00 1996-97 / 5.00 / 10.00 The presumption made in the paper report that export of wheat takes place only from the stocks released by FCI for export purposes is not correct. The total export figures of 617, 211 MT for 1995-96 and for 1996-97 given in the newspaper report are well within the export ceilings fixed for the respective years for the country as a whole. The export figures for 1995-96 and 1996-97 also includes the quantity sold by FCI under OMSS (Export).
(iv)	FCI imported 20 lakh MT of wheat to bridge the gap caused by wheat exports.	Stock position of wheat in the Central Pool was comfortable as per the Buffer Stock Norms upto September, 1996. In April, 1996 Agriculture Ministry estimated that the likely production of wheat would be 66.21 Million Tonnes. Subsequently, in June, 1996 the production was estimated at 64.00 Million Tonnes which was finally scaled down to 62.62 Million Tonnes in October, 1996. This represents a fall of about 3.15 Million Tonnes in estimated wheat production during 1995-96 as compared to 1994-95, when the production was 65.77 Million Tonnes. Consequently, wheat procure-

1	2
	ment during 1996-97 for the Central Pool fell by about 4.1 Million Tonnes. Government, therefore decided to import upto 2 million Tonnes of wheat during 1996-97 to augment its availability in the country and to contain the rising trend in the prices of wheat in the domestic market. Import of wheat had therefore, nothing to do with the export sales by FCI.

[Translation]

Central Official Language Committee

3144. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which neither the reconstitution nor any meeting of the Central Official Language Committee for the last two years; and

(b) the reasons for not constituting Hindi Advisory Committee in Prime Minister's Office and also for non-constitution of Official Languages Implementation Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) There is no committee namely Central Official Language Committee, however there is a Central Hindi Committee which is under the process of reconstitution.

(b) Prime Minister's Office is not a regular Ministry or Department of Government. It is a small office which renders secretarial assistance to the Prime Minister. In view of this it was not felt necessary to constitute Hindi Advisory Committee and Official Language Committee for this office. An additional Secretary has been entrusted with the duty of implementing instructions issued for the progressive use of Hindi.

[English]

Trawling in Arabian Sea

3145. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a ban was imposed on the trawling vessel of Kerala in the Arabian Sea whereas the foreign vessel and vessels of other States are operating there;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) The Government of Kerala has imposed a ban on the use of bottom trawl in the sea along the entire coastline of the State within its territorial waters for a period of 45 days from 15th June, 1997 to 29th July, 1997.

The Government of India has also imposed a ban on the operation of all deep sea fishing vessels, including foreign deep sea fishing vessels operated on lease, in the Exclusive Economic Zone off the coast of Kerala for the period referred to above.

(b) Does not arise in view of answer to (a) above.

(c) Adequate steps have been taken by the Government of Kerala to prevent trawling by foreign vessels and vessels of other States within the territorial waters of Kerala coast. Further, all deep sea fishing vessels operating from Kochi Port were required to shift their base Port elsewhere during the period of the ban referred to in answer to (a) above.

[Translation]

Revival of HFCL and FCI

3146. SHRI HARIVANSH SAHAI : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state.

(a) whether the Government contempleted to revive sick Fertilizer Corporation of India and Hindustan Fertiliser Corporation Limited;

(b) if so, the steps taken so far by the Government in this direction;

(c) whether the Chairman of Committee on Public Undertakings has written a letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (d) A letter dated 22.5.1997 has been received from the Chairman, Committee on Public Undertakings for expediting action on the revival plans for Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. (HFC) and Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. (FCI) in accordance with the decision taken by the Government in April 1995 and the recommendations of various Parliamentary Committees.

The revival packages for the functional units of HFC and FCI have been reformulated from the stand point of the financial institutions. The scope of the revamp is to